

by alternative plans. In Ohio, Colorado, California, Massachusetts, Nevada, Maine, Alaska, and Louisiana, over half of all state employees are covered by their own plans. In Texas and Illinois over one million employees are covered under state and local plans. Every state is impacted because about 75 percent of all public safety employees are not covered under Social Security. In Colorado there are more than 200,000 state, education, and local government employees who are outside of the federal retirement system.

These state and local disability and pension systems were developed because the original Social Security Act of 1937 excluded state and local governments from Social Security coverage. This was to avoid raising a possible Constitutional question of whether the federal government could tax state and local governments. Congress later amended the law to make state and local government employee participation in Social Security voluntary in 1950. In 1983, those already participating in Social Security were required to remain in the federal system.

In the absence of Social Security, Colorado state and local employees developed public retirement plans which have been able to provide solid, secure benefits at a reasonable cost. The plans earn better investment returns, through private sector investments, than are available through the current pay-as-you-go Social Security system. With a diversified investment fund, the state's largest public plan has earned an average annual investment return of over 11 percent during the last 25 years.

Furthermore, the plans are designed to meet the specific needs of public employees. Fire fighter pension plans, for example, are designed to take into account early retirement ages, high rates of disability and the need for extensive health care characteristic of this profession.

The one-size-fits-all approach of universal Social Security coverage would provide inadequate flexibility for safety workers' needs. Mandatory coverage will have additional consequences. Even on a new-hire basis, mandatory coverage will reduce the capital stream necessary for investment. In many plans around the country this will cause benefit cut-backs including reduced credit for future service, cuts in retiree health care coverage and cost of living adjustments.

Further, mandatory coverage represents a new tax and an unfunded federal mandate on states which would require state and local tax increases or a reduction in services for taxpayers. Health benefits for retirees would also be affected in many states.

Private sector workers would also be affected. Most states do not receive any income tax revenue from Social Security payments and the lost state revenue resulting from mandatory coverage would likely be made up from increased state taxes or budget cuts.

In Colorado, the public pension systems will be seriously compromised because most of the funding of benefit comes from investment income which would be severely cut by the transfer of significant contributions to Social Security. State retirement funds support Colorado's economy and the nation unlike Social Security funds which simply support other gov-

ernment programs. Reduced state pension investment means reduced Colorado capital investment. A decline in contributions translates into less investment in Colorado-based companies and real estate. Furthermore, when Colorado retirees receive fewer benefits they will pay fewer state income taxes.

The potential loss of revenue to the state is significant, but the loss of retirement contributions and security for Colorado state and local workers is even more troubling. Our state's Public Employees' Retirement Association (PERA) anticipates an end to plan improvements for current participants and retirees. New hires would receive a combined Social Security and PERA benefit that would be slightly less than three-fourths of the current PERA benefit.

To put it plainly, under mandatory Social Security state and local workers will lose out. New hires will lose the opportunity to participate in financially strong, high-earning retirement plans and they will be forced to partake in an inefficient system and receive far less or possibly nothing at all. Those already participating in state and local government retirement plans will experience a reduction in benefits when new hire funds are redirected to Social Security. In order to make contributions to both pension and Social Security plans, state and local governments will have to raise taxes or reduce services, in which case everyone loses.

The only advantage Congress would realize in this scheme would be to buy two extra years for Social Security.

Over the past year, I led our delegation to protect state and local government pension and disability plans. Letters I wrote expressing our united opposition to mandatory Social Security have reached your desk. Do not disregard them or underestimate our resolve.

Congress must preserve the freedom of states, school districts, and local governments to maintain plans which best meet their needs, independent of Social Security. Social Security can and must be fixed without destroying plans upon which our constituents depend for their retirement.

Mr. Speaker, if it works, don't break it.

THE MORTGAGE INTEREST DEDUCTION: A POWERFUL TOOL OF UPWARD MOBILITY

HON. KEN LUCAS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 22, 1999

Mr. LUCAS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, to so many Americans, owning a home means living the American dream. And the mortgage interest deduction has allowed so many Americans to fulfill this dream. The mortgage interest deduction and the property tax deduction have been a part of the Internal Revenue Code since its inception in 1913. It is a broad-based deduction, widely available to all taxpayers.

In 1995, of the 28 million taxpayers who used the mortgage interest deduction, 71 percent had incomes below \$75,000 and 42 percent had income below \$50,000. Sixty-seven percent of American households own their

own home. Most of this growth is among minorities and first-time homebuyers. We must ensure that we protect and preserve the mortgage interest deduction, a powerful tool of upward mobility.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JIM NUSSLE

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 22, 1999

Mr. NUSSLE. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday (April 20-22), I missed a series of roll call votes (Roll Call Votes No. 92-96). I had been granted a leave of absence by the House of Representatives to travel to and from, and to attend, the funeral of my grandmother. Had I been present during those votes, I would have cast my vote in the following manner:

Rollcall vote No. 92 (To suspend the rules and pass H.R. 573) 'aye' yea;

Rollcall vote No. 93 (To suspend the rules and pass H. Res. 128) 'aye' yea;

Rollcall vote No. 94 (To agree to the Conference Report to H.R. 800) 'aye' yea;

Rollcall vote No. 95 (On passage of H.R. 1184) 'aye' yea; and

Rollcall vote No. 96 (On motion to instruct conferees on H.R. 1141) 'aye' yea.

WOMEN OF THE YEAR

HON. STEVEN T. KUYKENDALL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 22, 1999

Mr. KUYKENDALL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to some outstanding women from my congressional district being honored tomorrow as the South Bay Women of the Year. The honorees are Ms. Patricia Harik, Mrs. Sandra Jacobs, Ms. Carole Keen, Mrs. Fran Limbird, Mrs. Inez Van Lingen, Mrs. Aruna Roy, Dr. Patricia Sacks, and Dr. Janet Switzer. A special recognition award, called the Switzer Star, is being bestowed upon Mrs. Angie Papadakis.

This honor is given to outstanding women each year by the Switzer Center School and Clinical Services located in the city of Torrance, which serves children with learning, emotional, or social challenges. The theme of the 1999 award is Women Who Make a Difference: those who impact the lives of others, or better their communities, their businesses or simply fulfill a need. This type of philanthropic duty is truly outstanding and I am glad the Center takes time to honor these truly extraordinary individuals within our community.

This year, the Switzer Star Recipient is award-winning humorist, lecturer, and author, Mrs. Angie Papadakis. Mrs. Papadakis is a pillar in the South Bay. Currently, she is the Commissioner of the Little Hoover Commission, Commissioner of the California Nevada Super Speed Train Commission, Founder and Director of Gang Alternative Program, on the Executive Board of the Los Angeles Area Council Boy Scouts of America, Member of

the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, and Director of the Rancho Los Alamitos Foundation Board. Mrs. Papadakis has received numerous awards from a variety of organizations like the Lions Club, the Salvation Army, the United Way, and the Y.M.C.A. Despite her many career accomplishments, Mrs. Papadakis is most proud of herself as a mother of three children and a grandmother to 10 grandchildren.

For her lengthy service to the South Bay, the Switzer Center has chosen to honor this outstanding individual and I am honored to add my own congratulations. I would also like to commend the other outstanding women being recognized by the Switzer Center.

ALDERMAN JOHN J. BUCHANAN'S
ACTIONS HAVE BENEFITED
WARD 10 IN THE CITY OF CHICAGO

HON. JERRY WELLER

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 22, 1999

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the work and dedication of Alderman John J. Buchanan who is retiring after serving as Alderman for the 10th Ward in the City of Chicago for over 20 years.

Alderman Buchanan is a life-long resident and public servant of the 10th Ward. Alderman Buchanan attended St. Patrick's Grammar School and St. Francis de Sales High School, where he graduated as class Valedictorian. The only time Alderman Buchanan left the community was during his service in the U.S. Navy. After his service to our country, Alderman Buchanan returned to the 10th Ward and married his high school sweetheart, Lorraine Halbe. Alderman Buchanan and his wife have two children and five grandchildren.

Alderman Buchanan's knowledge of business and industry comes from his richly diverse work background. At the age of 13, he was already working after school at Gassman's, a well-known men's store on Commercial Avenue. His work experiences include positions at the Aluminum Company of America, the U.S. Post Office and the Chicago Board of Education. Alderman Buchanan is also a licensed Stationary Engineer and has both a real estate broker's license and an insurance broker's license. It is probably Alderman Buchanan's experience as an insurance salesman that opened doors to his deeper understanding of the needs of the community. This path eventually led the Alderman to a life in the public arena.

Alderman Buchanan was first elected to office in 1963 and served the community until 1971. From 1972 until 1977, he served as a Coordinator of Economic Development for the Chicago Mayor's Office. While in this position, he successfully instituted programs for the retention and attraction of new business and industry. In 1991, Alderman Buchanan was once again elected to serve as Alderman of the 10th Ward in the City of Chicago. His City Council Committee memberships included Aviation; Budget and Government Relations; Rules and Ethics; Economic and Capital De-

velopment; Finance, Human Relations; Police and Fire.

In honor of Alderman Buchanan's distinguished career, I have introduced federal legislation to change the name of the Hegewish Post Office to John J. Buchanan U.S. Post Office. I am also pleased to report that at my request, every member of the Illinois Congressional Delegation has agreed to support this legislation.

My Speaker, I urge this body to identify and recognize others in their own districts whose careers and actions have so greatly benefited and strengthened America's communities.

A TRIBUTE TO BROOKLYN PRIDE

HON. ANTHONY D. WEINER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 22, 1999

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to invite my colleagues to pay tribute to Brooklyn Pride on the occasion of its Spring Gala.

This event is not only a festive happening, it is a chance for all of us to celebrate and pay tribute to a group of individuals who embody the spirit of independence and community activism. This year's honorees truly represent the best of what our community has to offer.

Joo-Hyun Kang is the Executive Director of the Audre Lorde Project. Before coming to the Audre Lorde Project, Joo-Hyun was the Program Coordinator for Women's Rights at the Women's Environment and Development Organization, an international women's organization founded by the late Bella Abzug. She has been active in various struggles for justice, particularly those addressing concerns related to women of color and to the gay and lesbian community.

Regina Shavers is the Program Director and founding Board member of the Griot Circle, the only Senior Center committed to affirming the lives of seniors in the gay and lesbian community. She is currently employed by the New York City Department of Health's HIV Training Institute as a training supervisor and serves as a Literacy Tutor at the Bedford Learning Center.

Continuing her family's tradition of community activism, Regina became an advocate for workers' rights while working for the New York City Police Department as a supervisor in their Communications Division Training Unit. Regina has also served as the Co-Chair of DC 37's Lesbian and Gay Issues Committee and served on the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Lesbian and Gay Rights National Advisory Board. An active member of Brooklyn Pride, Regina was an integral member of the city-wide coalition that negotiated with the City of New York to insure Domestic Partner benefits for all New York City employees.

Alan Fleishman is a lifelong Brooklyn resident who has lived in Park Slope for the last fifteen years. He has been an organizer in the lesbian and gay community and has served as the President of the Lambda Independent Democrats and the Gay Friends and Neighbors. Alan currently advises New York City Comptroller Hevesi on matters concerning the

lesbian and gay community as well as on HIV/AIDS issues and concerns. Mr. Fleishman has been honored by the Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats, the Paul Robeson Independent Democrats and the Brooklyn AIDS Task Force for his organizing work in Brooklyn.

All of today's honorees have long been known as innovators and beacons of good will to all those with whom they come into contact. Through their dedicated efforts, they have each helped to improve my constituents' quality of life. In recognition of their many accomplishments on behalf of my constituents, I offer my congratulations on their being honored by Brooklyn Pride.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PATIENT
EMPOWERMENT ACT OF 1999

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 22, 1999

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce the Patient Empowerment Act of 1999, the second in a series of Medicare modernization bills designed to improve program administration and the quality of health care for Medicare beneficiaries.

Mr. Speaker, Medicare beneficiaries currently have little or no control over their health care decisions. Instead of choosing the most appropriate course of treatment for their particular circumstance, some patients are being told what they should do based on an oversupply of hospital resources or physician specialists in their area. Many diseases have several treatment options available. In most cases, there is no evidence to suggest that one course of treatment is better than another.

Dr. John Wennberg, one of the world's most renowned health policy researchers, talks about this issue in the 1998 Dartmouth Atlas: "The greater the per capita supply of hospital resources, the greater will be their per capita use, and the greater the per capita expenditures." The Atlas provides overwhelming statistical proof that in the economics of health care, supply often drives demand.

Dr. Wennberg estimates that if Medicare spending for all hospital referral regions with higher rates were brought down to the level of spending in the Minneapolis region (considered a very high quality of care region), Medicare's financial problems would be solved.

Many costly hospital stays could be averted entirely if Medicare beneficiaries were fully informed about their treatment alternatives. Not surprisingly, when presented with the range of available options, patients will often choose less invasive treatments.

For example, treatment of benign prostatic hyperplasia, a common condition affecting the majority of men over the age of 65, ranges from surgical removal to watchful waiting. Each of the options raises a number of trade-offs: while surgery is the most effective way to deal with symptoms, undergoing surgery presents certain risks. In Wennberg's analysis, most men with mild symptoms choose watchful waiting when educated about the full range of options, and watchful waiting is clearly the least expensive of all the options.